§ 233. State Museum; collections made by the staff. 1. All scientific specimens and collections, works of art, objects of historic interest and similar property appropriate to a general museum, if owned by the state and not placed in other custody by a specific law, shall constitute the collections of the state museum. The state museum shall be the custodian of the collections, shall perform standard curatorial, research and educational activities and a director appointed by the regents shall constitute its head.

2. Any scientific collection made by a member of the museum staff during his term of office shall, unless otherwise authorized by resolution of the regents, belong to the state and form part of the state museum.

3. The state of New York, through its legislative authority accepts the provisions of section one hundred twenty of the federal-aid highway act of nineteen hundred fifty-six (70 Stat. 374) relating to the salvage of archaeological or paleontological objects, including but not limited to ruins, historic sites, Indian burial grounds, cemeteries, buildings, artifacts, fossils or, other objects of antiquity having national significance from an historical, cultural, social or scientific standpoint, and empowers and directs the commissioner of education to promulgate joint regulations with the department of environmental conservation, the office of general services, and the office of parks, recreation and historic preservation and make agreements with those and other appropriate state departments or agencies and such agency or agencies as needed to carry out the purposes of such provision of law.

4. Except as otherwise provided in subdivision three of this section, no person shall investigate, excavate, remove, injure, appropriate or destroy any object of archaeological, historical, cultural, social, scientific or paleontological interest, situated on, in or under lands owned by the state of New York, without the written permission of the commissioner of education. A violation of this provision shall constitute a class A misdemeanor. The attorney general, either independently or upon referral from a state agency, shall seek civil and/or criminal prosecution, civil and/or criminal penalties and any

other relief, including but not limited to seizure and forfeiture of the appropriate items, and forfeiture of the instrumentalities of the unauthorized actions on state lands. The discovery of any such objects shall be forthwith reported to the commissioner by the state department or agency having jurisdiction over such lands.

5. Permits for the examination, excavation or gathering of archaeological, historical, cultural, social, scientific or paleontological objects upon the lands under their respective jurisdictions may be granted by the heads of those state departments or agencies to persons authorized by the commissioner of education for the purposes of the state museum and state science service, for the purpose of the preservation of any such objects worthy of permanent preservation and, in all cases, to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge relating thereto.